HANDSOME HARRY

STORIES OF LAND AND SEA.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office by Frank Tousey

No. 12. **NEW YORK, APRIL 14, 1899.** **Price 5 Cents.**

HANDSOME HARRY IN A TRAP;

OR

THE BELVEDERE AND SPITFIRE

BY AUTHOR OF "HANDSOME HARRY."

"Who are you?" demanded Captain Grover. "I am the man you seek," replied Handsome Harry. "And why are you here?" asked Captain Grover, calmly. "To put myself right with you," replied Harry.

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Stories of Land and Sea.

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Handsome Harry in a Trap

OR,

THE BELVEDERE AND SPITFIRE.

LOUIS DAVIDSON.
1817 CLIFTON ST.
BALTIMORE MD.
129

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HANDSOME HARRY."

CHAPTER I.

LORD AND LADY BROWN.

"So, Chingy," said Samson, "you made up your mind to go?"

"Sammy," replied Ching-Ching, "I hab; and when dis mind ob mine am made up dere is no more to be said and done."

"Dat de trufe," said Samson; "but I say, Chingy, ole boy."

"Yes, Sammy."

"Am I to go as de lady?"

"Yes, Sammy, you must—so dat you wear de veil."

"But, Chingy, why should I wear de veil?"

"Because, Sammy, your skin am a shade darker dan de fair skin ob de lubly women ob ole England."

Samson could not in all conscience deny this, but he had yet another objection to make.

"Don't you tink, Chingy, dat I am a lilly too tall?"

"Oh, no," replied Ching-Ching readily; "you only look like a bery fine woman—bery much like de cousin ob my moder, who was so bery tall dat she used to go about Pekin finding tings on de fust floor ob de houses when de windys left open."

"She must hab been a bery fine lady," said Samson, thoughtfully.

"She was de finest woman in de land," replied Ching-Ching; "but she was bery unfortunate."

"How's dat?"

"Dere was a man dat lib on de fust floor ob a house in our street, and he was bery fond ob fresh air. De doctor recommend it, I beliebe, because he got cold on de chest, and he allers hab de fust-floor windy open. Him room was splendidly furnished—dere was a table, five chairs, a wash-stand, a hearth-rug—a lot ob fine tings—a looking-glass and a lubly bed. Put on dat petticoat, Sammy, while I go on wif de story."

"All right, Chingy," replied Samson, blundering into this garment.

"De cousin ob my moder," pursued Ching-Ching, "find dat windy open, and one day she brings in looking-glass. Habing de weakness ob her sect, she took dat fust. Den she find de hearth-rug, den de chairs, and so on, until dere was nuffin lef but de bedstead. You got de dress de wrong way, Sammy. Turn him round—dat's it."

"I see him now, Chingy."

"Now, on de day dat my moder's cousin go to find de bedstead, de man dat was fond ob fresh air hadn't got up, and when she get hold ob de leg and begin to draw it to de windy he woke and gib such a squirm dat you might hab heard it all up and down de street. Dat de bonnet in dat box, and de roses am in front."

"Yes, Chingy, but go on wif de story."

"Dat bedstead," pursued Ching-Ching, solemnly, "was a folding one, and my moder's cousin in her fright fold him up and

run away. What was de consequence, Sammy?"

"Me not know, Chingy."

"De man who was fond ob fresh air was smodered."

"Oh, Chingy!"

"It was a mellercholic fate," said Ching-Ching, looking meditatively at Samson; "and when de judy brought in a werdick ob suicide, and de bedstead was put up for sale to pay for de coroner's drink, my moder's cousin bought it cheap, and so furnished a nice little room in de back ob our house, whar she could see de water-butt widout bobstruction, and dere she lib a life of contentlement and peace."

"Oh!" exclaimed Samson, who rather thought that Ching-Ching's mother's cousin ought to have been found out and punished, but he did not like to say so.

"Now, Sammy," said the veracious narrator, "I tink dat you want a lilly derangement, as your clothes a lilly loose and muddled 'bout. Drop de petticoat anoder foot, and put on de veil. What a bery fine woman you are, Sammy!"

Samson certainly looked a giantess fresh out of a caravan, and on the whole presented a very startling appearance. He had on a flaming petticoat, just short enough to expose his huge feet; about that a dress which very nearly covered two-thirds of the petticoat, and above that a blue mantle, which covered a multitude of sins in the way of bad tying and lacing.

On his head he wore a huge coal-scuttle bonnet, and his face was covered with a thick veil.

"De best get-up dat I eber saw," said Ching-Ching, admiringly.

Samson was not so sure of it, but he did not like to go against the opinion of so great an authority as Ching-Ching, who now proceeded to attire himself to match.

From some corner of the house he had rummaged out a bright blue coat with brass buttons, buff-colored knee-breeches and waistcoat, a white hat with an enormous brim, and a pair of blue spectacles.

Having put on this alarming apparel, he mounted the spectacles, turned the pigtail into his hat, and declared himself to be ready.

"Mind dis, Sammy," he said, "you not to speak English. Lady much too proud to speak to dese foreigners. Only bow in dis way—bending de head and bringing de let leg back wif a greaseful kind ob jerk. I shall keep my hat on—like all de English lords do when dey visit dere friends—or dis pigtail may bring a lilly confusion about. Now, Sammy, we go down de back staircase, walk round de house, and come into de front door as bold as brass.

This part of the programme was executed without a mistake, and the precious pair stood in the shadow of the house waiting for an opportunity to go in.

A lull in the arrival of the company gave them the opening, and, with an amount of impudence hitherto unparalleled, they marched in at the door.

The appearance of Samson alone was sufficient to stagger all the servants, who one and all turned pale, but Ching-Ching gave them no time for reflection.

"Lord and Lady Brown," he said. "Denounce us."

"Inglise," exclaimed one of the servants, and making a sign to another, opened a door and shouted:

"Lord and my Lady Brun."

Don Salvo was standing close by talking to his daughter when the two awful spectres entered the room. He started for a moment, and then his hand was seized by Lord Brown and wrung affectionately. Samson did the bending of his head and the jerking of his left leg to perfection.

"Really—really, my lord," stammered the don, not knowing what to make of it, "I wasn't aware that you had arrived—but—ahem! Juanita, do you know anything about them?"

The latter part of the foregoing was uttered in a whisper.

Juanita, in the same tone, answered "No."

"There is an English man-of-war just in," said the don, uneasily, "and these people may have come by it. I should not like to make a mistake. But really, they are such extraordinary-looking creatures."

"Very, papa," said Juanita.

"And I really think I have seen his lordship before. Now they are both sitting

down, and the fellow keeps his hat on. The pride and insolence of these Inglese!"

"They are not usually proud or insolent," said Juanita.

"Oh, you are thinking of your guiding star," said the don, testily. "Do you think that all the sons of Albion are like him?"

Juanita did not reply, but moved in the direction of the new arrivals, and to the horror and alarm of Samson, addressed him.

"Lady Brown," she said, "will you come to the card-room?"

Samson was about to give her a reply in the negative, as he had no knowledge of card-playing whatever, when Ching-Ching nudged him, and remembering his part, Samson rose up and favored Juanita with another of his bows.

This Juanita took for an answer in the affirmative, and bowing slightly to Lord Brown, she led the half-stupefied Samson away.

Ching-Ching regarded this departure apparently with well-bred indifference, but the truth must out. His very pigtail quivered with apprehension. He had not calculated upon this part of the programme.

He knew the danger of Samson being by himself, but how could he avoid it now? Juanita's manner had plainly told him that it was the custom of the house to take her lady guests in charge and to leave the gentlemen to the host.

Ching-Ching was debating with himself the propriety of following Juanita and Samson to the card-room, when Don Salvo came up and said:

"Lord Brown, do you dance?"

"A lilly bit," replied Ching-Ching.

"The voice, too," muttered the don, "it is as familiar to me as my own. Who is the fellow? My lord——"

"Yes, hand—yes, Don Salvo."

Ching-Ching checked himself just in time in a form of speech which would inevitably have betrayed him, and rising to conceal his trepidation, he declared himself to be ready for the mazy dance.

"They have just sounded for a quadrille," said the don. "Let me find you a partner. Ha! here is the consul's wife, who will be glad to foot a figure with one of her own countrymen."

Ching-Ching little knew the precipice he was approaching when the don led him toward a stout lady clad in red velvet, who was fanning herself vigorously. He rather thought the title of Lord Brown a good one —she would have at once realized its absurdity, and blown upon the whole affair.

Fortunately for him, the don, when he introduced him, spoke a little indistinctly, and the consul's wife understood him to say "Howard Brown." Rising graciously, she took Ching-Ching's arm, and they advanced to their position in a set forming a quadrille.

"In our country," said the lady, "you would have been introduced as Mr. Howard Brown, but these Spaniards have no idea beyond don and senor."

"Dey am a rum lot ob scarecrows," said Ching-Ching.

"Dear me," thought the lady, "he has quite a foreign accent. Born abroad, I should say. Father in the diplomatic service, perhaps."

"When do we begin, handsome lady?" asked Ching-Ching, who was thinking to exhibit his agility, although he knew nothing whatever of the dance in which he was about to share.

"My husband and his vis-a-vis will lead off," she replied. "We play the part of the old-fashioned sides."

Ching-Ching looked opposite and beheld his old friend the consul standing up with a very thin lady, possessed of that juvenile appearance which thirty-five years and a single life gives a woman. He was talking to her in a heavy father kind of way, quite unconscious of the proximity of that most villainous Chinee.

I cannot stay to dwell upon that quadrille, and what I have to say upon it must, of necessity, be brief. Ching-Ching did all that was necessary in the quadrille, and a great deal that was not. He twirled the consul's wife about until she was giddy, and talked to her until she appeared to be quite stupefied. He banged against the consul whenever he got a chance, and never offered even the shadow of an apology, and when the consul's wife was half dead with wonderment and fatigue, he led her to a seat,

and, producing his fan from his trousers pocket, proceeded to fan her.

"You are very kind," she said, as soon as she got a little breath; "how active you are—but excuse me, why do you keep your hat on?"

Ching-Ching put on a most mysterious air, looked round, and, drawing close to her, whispered:

"For de sake ob a lubly creature."

"For—for—who?"

"A lubly creature—a lubly woman," replied Ching-Ching.

"I do not quite understand you," said the consul's wife. "Is it a love affair?"

"A bery serious lub affair," returned Ching-Ching. "She am dying."

"Dying—who?"

"De lubly creature."

"Why?"

"For de lub ob me."

The consul's wife looked at him and laughed. She could not help it—Ching-Ching was certainly a very comical figure.

"Ah, handsome lady," he said in his saddest tones, "you laugh at me, but dis get-up am a disguise."

"A disguise! This is something romantic. Do tell me about it!"

"Oh, no! It sound like boasting, handsome lady."

"Indeed it won't—and why do you call me handsome?"

"Because you am so."

"I am not."

"Oh, yes, you am."

"Indeed! then be it so," returned the consul's wife, immensely flattered. "But to return to this disguise. The spectacles, of course, are what you allude to."

"And de hat," replied Ching-Ching; "and why do I wear him, lubly lady? Listen." He looked cautiously around again, as if afraid of being overheard, and continued: "Under dis hat I hab conceal my curls."

"Your curls?"

"Yes, lubly lady, de handsomest curls dat eber was seen on de head ob a mortal man; and behind dese spectles am two eyes, beautifully blue—though I de man dat ought not to say it—reglar fixers, dat go through de femaline heart and carry 'em right away."

The consul's wife knew not what to say to this. It sounded to her like something immensely absurd, and yet Ching-Ching was so earnest. Furthermore, she was a bit of a fool, and so our friend was helped out with his story.

"Who is the lady?" she asked, after a slight pause.

"Dat," replied Ching-Ching, "am a most profoundest secret."

"But surely you can tell me."

"No, handsome lady. I berry much afraid I cannot."

"I will keep your secret," urged the consul's wife.

"Sure you will—but no—me not tell you," said Ching-Ching.

"Oh, do! I vow I won't breathe a word; indeed I won't."

"Den I tell you dis much," said Ching-Ching, lowering his voice to the lightest of whispers, "dat de lady in question am ob royal blood. Neber betray me, or my head not worf sixpence."

"Indeed I won't," replied the lady, adding to herself—"but, disguised as you are, in face and in voice, I'll have a look at those eyes and curls before the evening is over."

CHAPTER II.

SAMMY PLAYS WHIST.

Well-bred people are always careful about expressing surprise. Whatever they may feel, however much a man or woman in their midst may excite their astonishment, they manage to conceal it while they are out, and only give vent to it in the bosom of their own family.

Sammy's get-up was undoubtedly one of the most startling things ever presented to the public eye, but no man or woman ever moved a muscle as he was conducted into the card-room by Juanita.

"Let me see," she said; "you play whist, of course?"

Sammy had never touched a card in all his life, but as he had been forbidden to speak he could only bow, which Juanita accepted as a sign of assent.

"Here is a vacancy at this table," Juanita

continued; "the English consul is in want of a partner."

The consul looked up and bowed. He could not say that he did not, for there was the empty chair opposite him, and he was too well-bred to refuse any partner brought him by the hostess.

Sammy sat down, and through his veil took stock of those at the table. On his right sat a thin-visaged, sharp-looking man, the youngest brother of a poor baronet. Whist was the means by which he lived, and he was a perfect adept in the game. His partner, the wife of a gentleman who stayed at home while his wife wandered about abroad, sat on Sammy's left.

"Cut for deal," said the consul, shuffling the cards and putting them down.

The baronet's brother cut, and the consul dealt. Sammy took up his thirteen cards with about as much knowledge of their meaning as if they had been copies of the epitaphs inscribed on Greek tomb-stones.

Clubs were trumps, and the baronet's brother led off with the five of spades. Sammy looked intently at the card, until the consul said, "Your play, madam," then he put down the ace of trumps.

A few spectators had gathered round the table, and those who had a view at Samson's cards were immensely tickled. The consul was startled, but he and the lady each put on a small spade, and the consul took up the trick.

Then Samson, who had not made the smallest attempt to sort his cards, sat perfectly still, wondering what it was all about, until the consul said again:

"Your play, madam."

Thereupon Samson led off the queen of hearts, and a plethoric old gentleman behind his chair gave an audible chuckle. Samson had three other small hearts in his hand.

The queen was taken with the king by the baronet's brother, who immediately led the ace. The consul naturally thought that Samson would trump it, but he put the king of diamonds upon it, and then let all his cards drop upon the floor.

While he was picking them up, the baronet's brother said to the consul, dryly, "I congratulate you."

"The woman is either mad or drunk," muttered the consul.

When Samson reappeared with his cards, some were faced one way and some the other. The consul looked upon three small spades and groaned. Samson had made a revoke.

"Excuse me, madam," he said; "will you put your cards in order?"

Samson righted them, and the game proceeded. The baronet's brother led off a trump, and Samson put on a spade. The revoke was at once claimed and allowed, and the consul turned as black in the face as his partner was.

"Get the hand over," he muttered.

But this was easier said than done. Samson was fully conscious that something had gone wrong, and grew nervous. He dropped his cards again, this time upon the table, and the absurdity of his play was revealed.

"Oh!" cried the consul, rising and dashing his cards upon the table. "I cannot play with a lunatic."

"I claim the two trebles and the rub," said the baronet's brother, quietly. "Ten shilling points, four pounds."

The consul threw a five-pound note on the table and took a sovereign in change. The baronet's brother pocketed his gains quietly and nodded. The consul bowed stiffly and stalked away. The spectators waited to see the issue with the other lady, whose name was the Honorable Mrs. Higgins—honorable only in name, for she was perhaps one of the most dishonorable and dishonored women that ever lived, and that is saying a great deal.

Samson was glad that the game was over, although he could see that it had not ended pleasantly; but he had not the least idea that he had committed himself, and still less did he think that he had anything to pay, and so sat calmly surveying those about him through the thick folds of his veil.

The Honorable Mrs. Higgins sat fanning herself, waiting for her four pounds, and as she caught the eye of the baronet's brother, who was a very particular friend of hers, raised her eyebrows slightly, asking by the sign:

"Shall I get my money?"

He replied in the same way.

"Have it out of her; don't be swindled!"

Of course, both of them took Sammy for a remarkably majestic and peculiarly hideous specimen of the female sex.

Sammy, not knowing what was required of him, took no notice of the people or the signs they made.

"I suppose we shall not have another rubber?" said Mrs. Higgins.

"Not with the same partners," replied the baronet's brother.

"Then I suppose we had better retire," said the honorable lady, "when we have settled accounts?"

"I suppose so."

The hint was a broad one, but how was Sammy to take it if he did not understand? How could he have paid under any circumstances, as our dark friend had not a coin of any nation about him?"

So passed a minute, and Samson, thinking that he had better take a stroll, rose up from his seat.

The Honorable Mrs. Higgins rose likewise.

"Madam," she said, "I think you have forgotten something."

Samson saw that he was addressed, and looked about the floor, and on the chair and table. Finding nothing, he bowed, as per instructions, and moved a little away.

"Oh! you won't go in that way," said the Honorable Mrs. Higgins, flushing. "Come, madam; you know what I mean."

Samson bowed.

"You owe me four pounds; pay it, if you please."

Samson was startled, and forgot his instructions. He spoke.

"Wurra dat for?" he asked.

"I'm blessed if the brute isn't a nigger!" said the baronet's brother, and a general laugh escaped the lookers-on. Good breeding for once went down before astonishment.

"Nigger yourself!" said Samson, snapping his fingers. "You call me dat again and I bash your head agin de wall!"

"Even that won't alarm me," said the Honorable Mrs. Higgins, exerting herself to keep calm, "although it is plainly intended for my intimidation. I will trouble you for four pounds."

"I haben't got it," replied Samson.

"Then why did you play?" demanded Mrs. Higgins furiously.

"Cos de handsome lady ask me," replied Samson.

"Don't stand it, Sophy," said the baronet's brother; "at her."

Sophy, otherwise the Honorable Mrs. Higgins, thus urged, stood right in Samson's path.

"Pay me my four pounds," she said.

"I habn't any money wif me," replied Samson.

"You are a dirty, low, vulgar nigger impostor."

Samson was too much of a man to strike a woman, or even to answer her railing, and he only said:

"Oh! you—you are bery much mistaken, dat you are!"

"I am not," replied the Honorable Mrs. Higgins, whose fingers were now curling up ominously; "and if you don't pay me my four pounds, I'll have that hideous bonnet off your head."

"Go it, Sophy," said the baronet's brother.

CHAPTER III.

FATHER AND SON.

The position of Tom True was perilous indeed.

Of that alone could Harry think, as he bent over the precipice and looked upon the face of his friend. It did not strike him as strange that the old man by his side had called Tom his son; he did not think of that; all his mind was centered on the fact that Tom was there in great and awful peril—perchance dead.

"Tom!" he cried.

Tom's face showed not the slightest sign of recognition, and the old man wrung his hands and moaned—

"My son—my son!"

"We must save him if we can," said Harry hurriedly, looking about him. "I would

give ten years of my life for a stout rope now."

He might as well, at the moment, have wished for Lord Rosse's telescope. There was nothing in the way of ropes nearer than the Belvedere.

But without a rope nothing could be done—the sides of the crevice were as smooth as a wall. There was neither hand nor foot hold.

Action was necessary, and Harry was generally very prompt. Rising to his feet he said to the old man:

"Stay here—I will send a friend for aid and return to you."

"Utterly regardless of all risk he ran on his own account, he bounded down to the boulder beneath which he had left Ira. The American heard his footsteps, and shouted out:

"Any news?"

"Tom is above, but an accident has happened to him. Make all speed to the Belvedere and get some stout ropes, a crosstree, and half a dozen men. Tom's life depends on you!"

"I'm off," cried Ira, and with the same recklessness which had characterized Harry, he dashed down the broken sides of the cliff.

Harry returned to the old man, whom he found kneeling by the side of the rent, with his eyes fixed on the form of the inanimate youth below. "Has he moved?" he asked.

"No," replied the old man; "but he breathes!"

"I cannot see that he does," said Harry, after a long and earnest gaze upon his friend.

"You have not a father's eyes," said the old man.

"Pardon me," returned Harry; "are you his father?"

"I am."

"You met in Russia?"

"Yes, where I met, or rather saw, you."

"Met me," exclaimed Harry, opening his eyes.

"Yes; you were my guest for one night only."

Harry's astonishment amounted almost to embarrassment. He felt ashamed of having been the guest of a man whom he could not remember.

"I cannot find words to express my pain at having forgotten you," he said, "but——"

"There is nothing remarkable in a man forgetting that which he has never seen," said the old man.

More and more puzzled, Harry stood looking at the old man before him. He was a man of commanding presence, tall, and as handsome as a man could be who had gone the wrong side of sixty. There were deep lines of care in his cheeks and across his forehead, but these only added to the interest his appearance excited, without marring his manly beauty.

"I see," he said, "that you have got a problem which you cannot solve. Leave it for the present; when my son is restored to me, or all hope gone, I will tell you all."

"How did this accident happen?" asked Harry, after a silence.

"We had been upon the summit of the cliff," replied the old man, "which we had scaled with much trouble and toil, and on beholding your ship, which Tom, as you call him, recognized at once, we waved our arms, but you made no responsive signal, and fearing that you would sail on and leave us, Tom proposed that we should descend to the beach and follow you on your course. It was but a poor chance at the least, and we had hardly started when he slipped and fell. I sought to stay him with my feeble hands, but he rolled into this awful chasm."

"Poor Tom," replied Harry; "we saw you, but to us you appeared like mighty unnatural giants. We thought you were something supernatural."

"That was some natural phenomenon like the Specter of the Brocken, which every one has heard or read about," returned the old man.

"You were more awful than that—you were headless."

"A cloud descended upon us, but it soon passed away."

"I will never yield to superstitious fears again," said Harry; "but tell me, how was it you escaped from the Czar?"

"Escaped!" replied the old man with a shrug; "there was no escape in the question. They made us swim for it."

"Swim for what?"

"Our lives. The Czar had been knocking

about for weeks, and our provisions were running so close that only half a biscuit a day could be served out. The sailors, principally Finlanders, called my son and myself intruders, said we were eating their bread, and threatened to take our lives. Fortunately the Czar was brought near the land by the tide, but it never touched, and as she was being carried out again they bade us swim for our lives. I was old and feeble, the weaker for many days of semi-starvation, and Tom was weak too, but he gallantly bore me up through two miles of water until we touched land not far from here. The rest you know."

"They met with an awful fate as a reward for their cruelty," returned Harry, and then he briefly described the attack made by the proas and the result.

"Heaven pardon them! I forgive them with all my heart," said the old man, taking off his hat and murmuring a prayer.

"Noble old man," thought Harry.

"Hush!" exclaimed the other. "See—he moves."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes—yes! Darnley, my brave boy, look up, and move no more for your life. Help is at hand."

The word Darnley seemed to be familiar to Harry, but the clew was not strong enough yet. He had no time to think it out just them, for Tom was really moving, and after a slight, uneasy turn he opened his eyes.

"Tom, it is I—Harry. Move not one inch."

"What is this?" cried Tom, his face quivering with horror. "Where am I? What has happened?"

"You have fallen into a crevice in the earth," replied Harry, speaking very rapidly. The old man could not say a word. "We cannot get you out without ropes. Ira will be here speedily with them. Then all will be well. But move not. Look upward, and commend yourself to the Allwise Power who governs all things."

Tom's eyes closed, and his lips moved slightly, as if he were repeating a prayer. Could any position be more awful than his? And truly it was the time to offer up a petition for help.

A few seconds passed—long moments to the brave lad in peril. Keeping his eyes closed, he asked faintly:

"Will they be long?"

"I think I hear them," replied Harry, looking down the cliff. But alas! he could see nothing.

"Oh, bid them hasten!" cried Tom, in a voice of agony. "This poor clod of earth is yielding. I can feel it crumbling away, and below me I can hear the rush of the molten volcanic mass. What a dreadful death to die!"

"Bear up!" cried Harry.

"Remember what you are," added the old man, recovering a little.

"I shall not forget that I am a Darnley," replied Tom; "but few man can meet a thousand deaths unflinching, and here I die each moment. What dreadful rumblings there are below!"

They could hear them above, and the listeners quaked. The volcanic mutterings have no rival in the world. They exceed in horror all other sounds in creation.

Nor was it all fancy on Tom's part that the ledge on which he rested was falling. Harry could see little pieces breaking off and falling, doubtless the result of some slight tremor of the earth.

"In a few minutes the whole ledge will yield," he thought. "Oh, where is Ira? Will he never come?"

He looked down the cliff with eager eyes, but naught living beyond the seagulls could be seen.

CHAPTER IV.

CHING-CHING'S CURLS.

It is well known that the nearest thing to perpetual motion which can be found on earth is a woman's tongue. On the whole it is a most delightful organ, but there are times, especially in the prime of life and old age, when the music that it gives out is a little harsh and out of tune.

Sometimes it works mischief, and, by scattering scandal broadcast, does no end of injury. At other times it only tattles and

spreads a story of interest abroad, exciting the curiosity of all listeners.

The consul's wife—true to her sex—was no sooner in possession of the remarkable reasons for Ching-Ching's disguise than she proceeded to let her most intimate friend into the secret, and among the last to share it was Don Salvo.

"Ah! my dear Don Salvo, what a pleasant assemblage you have to-night!"

"Yes," he said; "I am highly honored by the best people of Fortalega."

"Particularly in Lord Brown," was the lady's next remark.

Don Salvo looked at her curiously, thinking that she was quizzing, but the lady was perfectly serious.

"His lordship," said the don, "is a stranger to me, but he is welcome."

"A handsome man," returned the lady.

This time the don was confident that the consul's wife was quizzing him, and he bowed rather stiffly, as he replied:

"Beauty, philosophers tell us, is quite a matter of taste."

"As he is now I do not pretend to say he is handsome," said the lady, "but cannot you see——"

"What?" asked the don.

"That which is hidden beneath those blue spectacles and that hat."

"Really, I cannot," said the don, with a curious expression of face.

"Then I must tell you," whispered the consul's wife; "beneath that rude disguise lies hidden the most beautiful blue eyes and richest curls you ever saw."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the don. "Have you seen them?"

The lady smiled as much as to say, "I have, but, I must not talk, you know."

"And why should he come here disguised?" asked the don.

"Because — because — now, can I trust you?"

"You may," he said.

"Because a lady of the royal family is in love with him."

"Then she is a most improper woman, unworthy of royalty."

"She is but mortal; and he is a handsome man."

"My dear lady, he is married."

"Married!" echoed the consul's wife.

"Yes, and Lady Brown is here."

The consul's wife scarcely knew what to make of it. She looked hither and thither for a moment or two in silence. At length she said:

"I should like to see Lady Brown."

"She is in the card-room. Come with me."

He bowed and offered his arm, which the lady took, and they sauntered across the room.

"His wife," continued the don, "is a great, gaunt creature, English all over, with some horrible disease in the face, I think, as she keeps it closely veiled. Altogether they are a very mysterious pair."

"He said nothing about his wife. Perhaps he formed a marriage of interest and made himself miserable for life. Poor fellow."

"Here is the card-room," said the don. "Dear me, there seems to be some disturbance going on; what can it be?"

A disturbance indeed there was, and high above it was lifted up the voice of the Honorable Mrs. Higgins.

"You great gaunt creature, pay me my money or I'll have your bonnet off."

"Hab no money," replied the voice of Samson, "else I pay you."

"That voice," cried the don; "excuse me a moment; I know the fellow well."

"It is a lady speaker," said the consul's wife.

"A lady be ——" somethinged—muttered the don, and darting across the room he confronted Samson just as the Honorable Mrs. Higgins carried out her threat and clawed his bonnet off.

The face of our humble, simple friend was hailed with a shout. Everything gave way to the surprise of the moment, and the interest of the scene was increased by Don Salvo, who worked his fingers in the air in an impotent manner and hissed out:

"You black-faced villain, I half suspected this to be some trick; but I'll be revenged. I'll have you boiled—baked—toasted alive; I'll hang you; I'll send you away to the mines. I'll—I'll—but where is the head rascal—that low, smooth-tongued, scheming, impudent, rascally Chinee?"

The rascally Chinee was at that moment

sauntering about the ball-room with the easy, graceful air which so well became him, quite unconscious of his approaching peril. Hearing a little more noise than usual in the direction of the card-room, he made for it, and reached the door just in time to come full tilt against the don, who was rushing out to find him.

The shock sent Ching-Ching against the doorpost, and put the weazened old Spaniard on his back; but with incredible agility the latter was up in a moment, shaking his fist in Lord Brown's face.

The whole proceeding was so extraordinary that the dancing was broken up, and the guests rushed in a body to the scene of the disturbance. Foremost stood the consul and his wife.

Ching-Ching saw that the game was up, but unabashed he proceeded to remonstrate.

"Wurra dis?" he cried, "de English guberment hear of it and den some of you get into a pretty pickle. You not insult Lord Brown with impunity."

"Lord Brown," yelled Don Salvo, dancing about him, "I'll Lord Brown you; let me get at you. Look at your brother villain there."

The "brother villain" was the dismayed Samson, who had been pushed forward by the press and stood within a couple of yards of Ching-Ching with the fragments of his bonnet hanging about his neck—a very pretty picture.

Ching-Ching looked at him and calmly said:

"Who de debil am dat?"

The cool impudence of the question made the don fume again, and he was none the better when several of the guests laughed aloud.

"Who is it?" screamed Don Salvo; "why, it is your confederate."

"Oh, no," said Ching-Ching, softly, "me nebber see him afore." Then in the confusion of the moment he made a slight mistake, and betrayed himself—"Oh, no! I nebber see him afore. Sammy know dat—ax him. Dere he is. De best witness ob de trufe dat eber wore a bonnet round him neck."

"You hear him," cried the don, appealing to his guests. "He says he does not know the brute, and yet he calls him by name. Oh! I'll—I'll——"

And then, with the activity of a cat, he sprang upon Ching-Ching, taking even that wary one unawares, and knocked his hat and spectacles off.

Down came the pig tail—the one curl Ching-Ching possessed—and the arch villain stood before the excited company.

The only spectator who was really angry and excited was the don. The others looked upon it as rather a good joke, and loud was the laughter. Ching-Ching was known to several of them, and although he was not popular in the true sense of the word, he was sufficiently notorious to excite their interest.

"Now, look at the impostor," yelled the don. "Oh, you barefaced—you—you pig-tailed swine of a fellow!"

"Wurra all dis 'bout?" asked Ching-Ching. "Now, come sar, did you not tell me to hab a lilly joke wif your friends?"

"I—I—I—tell you—you bare—bareboned scoundrel."

"Perhaps you say," pursued Ching-Ching, "dat you not tell me to dress up as de Lord Brown, and come and make a lilly bit ob fun."

"I never dreamed of such a piece of tomfoolery in all the days of my life," returned the don, half beside himself with fury.

"I knew," cried Ching-Ching, in a tone of triumph, "and Sammy knew it, too. But nebber mind—I forgib you; but please not to ax me to come to your house agen, for I see you fader fust. Sammy, where am you? Let us leab dis place."

"You will do nothing of the sort," cried the don. "I will have you severely punished for this trick, and I call upon my friends to help me to detain you. Gentlemen, aid me, if you respect me."

CHAPTER V.

TIMELY HELP.

"Tom! How fares it with you now?"

It was Harry who spoke, and he asked the question mechanically. It seemed as

if he wished to kill a moment or two with the utterance of empty words.

Tom looked up, patient and resigned, and smiled sadly.

"There is no help coming," he said. "I can see that in your face, and this frail support beneath me trembles at the volcanic commotion below. A dreadful doom!"

"We will die together," cried his father. "Fear not, my boy, I will not survive you."

"That would be madness," replied Tom, "and I pray you not to embitter my last moments with the thought that you will be sacrificed too. Promise me that you will do nothing rash."

The hot tears rained down the old man's cheeks, and he shook convulsively. Tom urged him again, and he gave his promise.

"And now farewell, both," said the brave lad.

"Tell those in England how I faced death, and it may do something to spur on the brave boys of my native land. Hark! another roar below. The fire is eager for its prey, but it will get naught but the shell—the spirit itself is safe. Adieu, Harry! This mass of clay is sinking."

"Hush!" cried Harry. "Voices are coming up the mountain. Help is indeed at hand. This way, my men!"

"All right, captain," returned the voice of Ira Staines, as he leaped up, followed by a half-dozen men, carrying a stout pole and some strong rope between them.

"No words," said Harry, "but work."

With a rapid, skilful hand, he bound one end of the rope to the centre of the pole, and bade the men fix the pole across the chasm, just over Tom, and hold it firmly.

They were yet engaged in fulfilling his instructions when he slid down the rope, shouting his motto:

"I come!"

"Hush!" murmured Tom, faintly. "Again the earth trembles—it shakes. Father of mercies, I am going—oh!"

But a strong arm was around him, and the mass of earth dashed into the molten mass far, far below, leaving him and Harry dangling in the air.

Nothing but the stoutest arm and the greatest coolness could have saved them then, and fortunately Handsome Harry possessed them both. He did not venture to look down—that would have been both unnecessary and unwise—but looking up, said, calmly:

"Haul up quickly, my men."

They had been motionless with awe at the peril of their leader, but his voice aroused them, and in less time than it takes to relate, Harry and Tom were safe.

Ira Staines had armed himself with some liquor, and a small quantity revived Tom, and a similar dose to the father saved him from a threatened insensibility brought on by emotion.

For some seconds Harry and Tom stood with their hands clasped together, each wondering if it were not all a dream.

"Saved, Tom!" said Harry, at last.

"Yes, saved, and by you, the noblest friend that ever man had."

As they moved down the cliff—which, by the way, might very reasonably have been called a mountain—Tom told Harry the story of his restoration to his parent, and it was thus:

His father was Sir Darnley-Darnley, whose sad history was recorded in the manuscript given to him by Tyneford, whose real name, as we know, was Thorn. The brother so haplessly shot did not die then, but under very clever surgical care recovered, but by that time Sir Darnley and Thorn were lost to the world and all the efforts of his wife to find him were fruitless.

In time she died, and her brother died too, but to Tom was intrusted the sacred charge of finding his father, and hence his endeavors to do so by leading a life of adventure, as all the ordinary methods had utterly failed.

"I was warned," he said, "that the very mention of my name might be sufficient to send my father flying further away, and for this purpose I religiously kept my secret. The revelation of it could have done no good to you, Harry."

"Not a bit," said our hero; "but now that you have found Sir Darnley I share your joy."

"What that is," said Darnley, "no words can express."

"I can believe it," returned Harry; "but

what has become of Tyneford, or Thorn, I ought to call him—a faithful fellow?"

"He died just before we left Russia," said Tom. "He had long been ailing, although he kept his suffering a secret, and he died soon after I declared myself. When we return home he shall have a monument worthy of his great fidelity."

"No monument can be worthy of him," said Sir Darnley.

Harry proposed to return to the Belvedere and have a day or two's rest, sufficient to recruit Tom and his father, and then return overland to Fortalega, and leave Bill Grunt in charge of the Belvedere in Jumna Bay, as previously proposed.

"Don Salvo can stow us away snug enough," he said, "but it is difficult to pack a ship out of sight."

"Will you leave Ching-Ching with Grunt and Cutten?"

Harry explained how Ching-Ching had been left behind, and as Tom laughed he looked almost like his old self again.

"We shall hear of them as soon as we arrive at Fortalega, I'll warrant," he said, and roared again.

The Belvedere men gave Tom such a reception that he was almost overpowered, and Harry prudently hurried him below and gave him a glass of wine. Sir Darnley had a little too, and then Harry left them to take charge of his ship into the bay.

The entrance to this, the proposed hiding-place of the Belvedere, was rather dangerous, as all along the mouth of the bar rocks were scattered, and inside great masses stood up here and there like the Needles off the Isle of Wight, only many of those in Jumna Bay were larger.

Tom said it was a misnomer to call it a bay, as it was nothing more than an islet covered with dangerous rocks. Harry explained to him that it went by that name among a certain class of smugglers and freebooters who were accustomed to take refuge there.

The Belvedere was towed behind one of the masses of rock and anchored. In this position she was quite out of sight of anything at sea, and having seen her topmasts taken down and everything made snug, Harry, with Ira Staines, Tom, and Sir Darnley, left her and proceeded on their overland journey back to Fortalega.

Nothing of any moment occurred on the way, and they arrived at the town one night shortly before the midnight hour.

"The don is sure to be up," said Harry, "as the night is the only time the people here can enjoy themselves. There is his house, lighted up from top to bottom. But we Belvederes must be careful, as he may be entertaining some of the English officers.

They drew near cautiously, and, finding the coast clear, Harry and Tom advanced to the front door and passed in. At that moment a most terrific uproar burst from within the house, and the screams of women, mingled with the cries of men, fell upon their ears.

"A fight!" said Harry. "Are you ready to join in, Tom?"

"As ready as ever," was Tom's reply, and running into the hall—which was empty—they made for an open door from whence the sounds proceeded.

As they looked in, a most astonishing scene met their view. In a large room a number of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen were struggling like maniacs to get at something which at first Harry did not perceive, but on a second glance he discovered the heads of the immortal Ching-Ching and the partner of his sorrows and joys—Samson.

He knew at once that the pair were in trouble, and without considering or caring much what the cause of it was, he rushed into the room, shouting:

"Hold! Fair play, there—not two hundred to two!"

The guests heard his voice, and a stillness fell upon them. It was broken by Ching-Ching and Samson, who heard Harry's voice, and speedily made a lane to his side.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE "BELVEDERE."

The struggle had been very dear to them. Samson had lost more than half his feminine apparel, but of course he had his usual attire underneath; but Ching-Ching had not, and

as his get-up was very little more than a bundle of rags, we need not marvel when we learn that several of the ladies screamed, and an old maid, a trifle over sixty, got up a faint, and fell into the arms of—a chair, nothing living being handy.

"What is all this hubbub about?" asked Harry.

"The meaning," cried Don Salvo, struggling to the front, "the meaning—why, it is this, that I will have the life of both of them, especially that most accursed of all accursed Chinese beggars."

"Get out of the way," whispered Tom to Ching-Ching, and in a twinkling he and Samson were gone.

"Now, my dear don," said Harry, taking him by the arm, and drawing him aside, "don't let us have a disturbance here."

"But I have been outraged, my guests insulted, and my daughter—where is she? confound her!—my daughter made a tool of. I'll have their lives, I say!"

"They shall be punished," returned Harry. "But tell me, is it safe to remain here?"

"No, by the saints!" said the don; "that is a timely thought of yours. Go to my room with your friends, and I will join you as soon as I have smoothed down my guests, ruffled by that—that—there is no word that I know which sufficiently expresses what he is."

It was high noon, and not a breath of wind ruffled the sea. The tide was running into Jumna Boy, but the water ran easily round the rocks without any of the angry beating generally to be witnessed there at such times. A seagull or two flew lazily about, too inert to dive after the fish which lay in thousands under the transparent deep.

Snug in its shelter lay the Belvedere, with an awning stretched right over the deck, and underneath lay the men in groups, smoking, talking, and playing dominoes and cards.

One man, and one man only, was on duty, and he was lying upon the rock, looking out for friend or foe. He could easily see on every side, but sharp eyes were needed to detect him.

A little aft of the rest sat Bill Grunt and Mr. Edward Cutten, each with a glass of spirituous liquor before him. Eddard was indulging in a pipe, while Bill Grunt chewed the invigorating quid.

"It's now a week, Eddard, since the cap'en left," said the boatswain; "and werry pleasant the time have gone."

"It's Pairydise," replied Eddard, "which the Belvedere would allus hev been but for them two parties."

"Ah, them's the inklebus!" rejoined Bill; "there's more evil worked by them than all the ship's company put together."

"Anyhow, they ain't here, and 'ere's your 'elth, Bill."

"Your's, Eddard. Prime liquor, this—the cap'en keeps good stuff."

"In his own cabin there's better, I'll bet, Bill."

"He never touches it," said Bill, "but drinks a lot of wash, called light wine, which you couldn't make a blue-bottle drunk on. But that's his fancy, and his look-out—I wouldn't drink it. Mix up agen, Eddard, for I'm about to give a toast."

Eddard complied with an alacrity which showed that mixing up again was no distasteful task to him.

Bill Grunt mixed too, and stirred the compound thoughtfully.

"Eddard," he said, "the toast as I wishes to give is confusion and rooin to them two parties as I needn't name. Blow 'em both! You may tot the lot up on the toast, Eddard, and mix agen."

"Sail away!" roared the man from the rock.

Eddard put down his glass untasted, and, like the rest, sprang to his feet.

"What's she like?" asked Bill Grunt.

"Can't make her out, sir," returned the man.

"How far off?"

"Just peeping out o' the water, sir."

"All right, I'll come up to you, and squint her."

Bill jumped upon the rock and clambered up. Fixing his glass he made out a latteen sail.

"Only a fisherman," he said contemptuously, and went down again, after bidding the look-out to keep his eye on her course.

"Now, Eddard," he said, taking his old seat, "you haven't——"

"Bearing this way, sir," roared the man.

"Silence, then," replied Bill. "What on airth is it?"

The boatswain got up, and returned to the inspection post, when he had a view of the boat—which was nothing more than a fishing craft—not only coming in that direction, but actually entering the bay.

It was steered ably, by one who evidently knew the ins and outs of the place, and it bore down directly upon the rock which concealed the Belvedere.

Bill Grunt knew that there was no real cause for fear, but he felt rather uneasy, and watched the movements of the boat with as much interest as he often viewed the working of a man-of-war.

It came nearer, and he saw that there were two men in it, and in another minute he knew them—

Samson and Ching-Ching.

"Well, I'm smithered!" exclaimed the boatswain. "Just as we thought we'd got rid of them, here they air."

He returned to the deck of the Belvedere, and told his friend Eddard that the boat was handy, and asked him to guess who was in it.

Eddard read the truth in his face, and finished off his rum.

"Let 'em come," he said, rolling up his cuffs a little wildly. "I'm ready for 'em!"

"That ain't no good," said Bill. "You tried that afore."

Mr. Eddard Cutten's mind went back to a certain scene in Russia, and he put his cuffs back to their original position.

"Anyhow, Bill," he said, "you won't stand their nonsense?"

"I'll try not to," replied Bill, gloomily, and then in his emotion he swallowed his quid and coughed.

"Ah! dat a berry bad cough," said the hated Ching-Ching, and the boat grated against the side of the Belevede.

Ching-Ching and Samson, active as sprites, came over the side, and the former made a friendly bow.

"Ah! dat Missa Grunt coughing," he said. "Now, I tink dat I cure de cough if you only take my prescription."

"I ain't got no cough," growled Bill, "and blow your perscriptions!"

"I said to Missa Harry dat dis place not agree wif you," returned Ching-Ching, "and so he say, 'Dear Chingy, my fren', go and cheer him up, and relieve him mind by taking command ob de ship."

"I'll never believe that," said Bill.

"Sammy," said Ching-Ching, turning to his invaluable witness, "am I deceibing ob Missa Grunt? Speak up."

"'Bout what?" asked Sammy, who was a little confused.

"What did Missa Harry say 'bout de command ob de ship?" asked Ching-Ching. "Just afore we lef—when we was standing in de doorstep, shaking hands like two brudders."

Samson had not the slightest recollection of that affecting incident, and knew not what to say. Ching-Ching relieved him.

"All dis come ob de good wine which de don gib," he said, shaking his head waggishly. "It was a merry time dat we had wif dat berry admirable old man, and I never forget de way dat he stand on him legs and shake hands wif you 'cross de table, swearing 'ternal frenship. But I not come to talk ob dat," continued Ching-Ching, "I come to take de command ob de ship."

"Have you brought any writing with you?" asked Bill.

"Yes! I got some writing," replied Ching-Ching, feeling in all his pockets. "But whar am him? Sammy, whar did I put the cap'en's pistol?"

"I tink you put it in de lef leg pocket," returned Samson.

Ching-Ching felt there, and found nothing but a candle-end, which he had found straying. He tried the other pockets and found nothing.

"But you see the cap'en gib it to me," said Ching-Ching.

"Oh, yes; I see dat," replied Samson; "in a wallop."

"In a what?" replied Bill.

"A wallop," replied Samson.

"He means a antelope," said Bill, addressing Eddard. "There's ignorance."

"Awful!" said Eddard.

"Dat the latest word for de ting," put in Ching-Ching coming to the rescue; "but now to business. I got to hab de command ob de ship. Sammy know dat, and he hab giben de most concluding ebidence."

"Dere was a note given to you by Massa Harry," said Samson emphatically. He was a little nettled at the way Bill Grunt had taken him up about the envelope, and he was prepared to be firmer in his supporting evidence than usual.

Bill Grunt knew not what to do, and when he appealed in an undertone to Eddard, that worthy shirked the question altogether, and merely said that the boatswain had a better head than he possessed, and had better form his own judgment.

"But you can't believe him," urged Bill Grunt.

"Don't believe him, den," said Ching-Ching, "and when de cap'en come on board he settle wif you."

"P'raps you are to have his cabin," said Bill.

"No, but I am to hab de one dat Missa Tom used to hab. Missa Tom not coming back."

"Not coming back?" exclaimed Bill Grunt incredulously.

"No," replied Ching-Ching, and indeed he was telling the truth for once. "He and him lubly fader am going to England 'bout some business dat concern some property. How much Tom's fader like my fader!"

"I dare say," sneered Cutten.

"De same eye," pursued Ching, ignoring him, "de same Roman-Greek nose, and de same noble mouf; but I tink my fader a little taller and more majestrick. But dat come ob him noble blood."

"Whose noble blood?" asked Bill.

"My fader's."

"It's my belief," said Bill Grunt, "that you never had a father."

"And if you had, he wouldn't own you," said old Cutten.

"Please to consider dat I am in command ob de Belvedere," said Ching-Ching, "and dat it am death to insult your superior officer. Go below, bofe ob you."

"I won't!" said Bill.

"Shan't!" said Cutten.

"Sammy," said Ching-Ching, carefully placing his fan and umbrella on the deck, "dis am de rankest mutiny eber since de days ob de mutiny ob de Nora. Do your duty, Sammy. I take Missa Grunt, and you foller wif dat vile ole man, Cutten."

And in a moment, before Bill Grunt had fairly realized his intentions, he whipped him up in his arms, and despite his kicking, with strong language to match, carried him below. Cutten, like a wise man, yielded to his fate, and allowed Samson to carry him down without a struggle.

Selecting his old cabin, Ching-Ching carried the boatswain in, and held him until Samson had deposited old Cutten in a corner; then he put Bill out at full length upon the floor, pushed Samson out, followed, and locked the door.

"Now, Sammy," he said, "we hab de command ob de ship."

They went on deck, and almost immediately after their reappearance the man on the lookout cried:

"Man on shore!"

"Wurra man!" asked Captain Ching-Ching; "gib me him name."

"He's a good two miles away, yet," replied the look-out. "But where's Mr. Grunt? Tell him about the stranger."

"Misser Grunt," replied Ching-Ching, "was a jewsharper, and I'm the real cap'en. Take your orders from me."

The sailors, who had gathered pretty thickly around Samson and Ching-Ching, grinned mightily at this announcement; but the new captain was down upon them in a moment.

"Ebery man to him post and no grinning," he said. "Sammy pitch the next grinner oberboard."

"Stranger, signaling for a boat," bawled the look-out.

"Fetch dat man in de cutter," said Ching-Ching, haughtily; "Sammy, take demand ob de cutter and bring de party on board."

Half a dozen men lowered the cutter and sprang into her. Sammy, fully believing that Ching-Ching was duly authorized, calmly took his seat in the stern and the boat put off—the men with their heads well down to conceal their countenances. Sailors are very seldom fools, and those of the Belvedere being uncommonly sharp, they had a pretty good idea of how the cat jumped.

The stranger, in short, proved to be a tall, lithe half-caste—one of those men often em-

ployed by the Spaniards to carry messages, when a long foot-journey is imperative.

They are a silent race, and seldom waste their words. When the boat touched the beach the stranger sprang in, pointed to the Belvedere, and squatted down in the bow of the cutter.

The men looked at Samson for orders, but as he gave none, contenting himself with sitting there in a state of silent dignity, they pulled back, and the half-caste was the first to reach the deck.

"The officer in command?" he said.

"Here am dat genlyman!" replied Ching-Ching, stepping forward.

"A letter from the captain," said the stranger.

"Tank you," said Ching-Ching, as he received the missive; "any answer, my friend?"

"No!" replied the messenger.

"I see dere am not," replied Ching-Ching, as he opened the letter and looked at it with a sagacious air. "You come a long way?"

"I left Fortalega the day before yesterday, and I have rested only once on the way," was the messenger's reply.

"Den you must want a lilly sumfin to drink."

"To eat, more than to drink," said the half-caste.

Ching-Ching bade one of the sailors give the man food, and then beckoned to Samson to follow him to a quiet part of the deck.

"Sammy," he said, "I got a letter from de cap'en, ole boy."

"It bery kind ob de cap'en to write to you, Chingy."

"Yes, so it am; but, Sammy, who to read him?"

"You, Chingy."

"No, Sammy; me not able to do dat."

"But you read de oder letter dat you tear up."

"No, Sammy," replied Ching-Ching, in a wnisper of whispers, "but me read the cap'en's face, and dat tell me dat he gib Bill Grunt orders to lock bof up until he come on board. So I turn de tables and lock up Bill and ole Cutten.

"Dat a bery good joke, Chingy; but——"

"What, Sammy?"

"How 'bout de time when de cap'en come on board?"

"Plenty time to tink ob dat when he do come; but 'bout dis letter, Sammy. We must read him somehow."

"Ax one ob de men to read him for you."

"Dat not worthy of a cap'en," returned Ching-Ching. "No, but I tink dat I ax Missa Grunt to."

"He nebber do that, Chingy."

"I hab a try, Sammy."

Accordingly, that dauntless son of China went below, and knocked at the cabin door.

"Who's there?" roared Bill.

"Me," replied Ching-Ching, unlocking the door and putting his head in. "My lilly joke ober, and I come to make you bofe happy."

"If I had a wepping," said Bill, looking about him, "I would knock your head off."

"Dat bery good idea," returned Ching-Ching, coolly, "but me not quarrel. Now dat I hab de demand of the ship I make you so bery comforble, lots of rum and nothing to do. But de last words ob de cap'en were: 'I shall write to you, my dear old Chingy, and Missa Grunt will read my letters to you,'" and Ching-Ching boldly presented Grunt the letter he had received.

Bill saw that it was addressed to himself, but he kept his countenance wonderfully. Long suffering and trials had made him artful.

"There ain't much in it," he said, "it's only about the coat of paint for the long boat."

"Did he send de message for dat?" asked Ching-Ching, who was hard to convince at all times, and particularly so now.

"No, there's none," continued Bill. "He says he won't be aboard for a few weeks, and that the men are to make themselves as happy as they can without him."

"Oh! tank you, Missa Grunt," said Ching-Ching, wriggling out his gratitude. "I send you a bottle ob rum to drink for dat."

Hastening back to Sammy, Ching-Ching told him the joyful news, and the pair cut sundry capers, expressive of unlimited satisfaction, but it is doubtful if they would not have danced in another fashion if they had known the real contents of the letter, which ran as follows:

"Shall be on board shortly after the messenger gives you this. Have everything ready to start at a minute's notice. H.

"To Mr. William Grunt."

Artful Bill Grunt. He saw his opportunity, and allowed Ching-Ching to rush to his ruin.

CHAPTER VII.

CHING-CHING IS DISMISSED.

Quite unconscious of the mine which was beneath him, Ching-Ching proceeded to make the most of his time and the power which his present command of the Belvedere gave him.

This line of conduct has, I believe, been generally pursued by usurpers, especially those gentlemen who believe that their reign will be short; and our friend was, therefore, but pursuing the general line adopted by other gentlemen in the same position.

His first act was to order a table to be spread with the best eatables and drinkables the ship afforded. This he had placed on the spot aft where Harry generally sat, and selecting the most comfortable arm-chair in our hero's cabin he brought it on deck, and sat down to enjoy himself.

Of course Samson was invited to share, but the sailors, who looked on with reverential admiration at the audacity of Ching-Ching, were obliged to rest contented with the promise that they should have "what was left," a promise which gave them but little joy, as the stowing-away capabilities of Samson and Ching-Ching were too well known.

"De fust ting now is to gib orders dat we am not to be disturbed," said Ching-Ching, "and if any man come and only so much as open him mouf to me, I hab him put in irons—dat I swear by my fader's pig-tail, the longest in Pekin."

The men accepted the hint and retired to a distance, where they looked on at the feast, exchanging grins with each other.

Ching-Ching's attitude was perfect. No alderman at a feast ever looked with more contented ease, and when he held his first glass of wine up to the light he looked a perfect connoisseur.

"It not a bad ting, dis playing de cap'en," he said. "Sammy, fill up your glass. Here's to de health ob the greatest man ob de day, which am—myself."

"Dat so, Chingy," said Sammy. "You bery good health."

"Dere sumfin bery pleasant 'bout eating and drinking tings which don't b'long to you, Sammy, ole boy."

"Stolen feet am sweetest," returned Sammy, with a very hazy notion of an old proverb.

"Party on shore approaching," bellowed the man on the look-out.

"Eh, warra dis?" cried Ching-Ching, springing to his feet.

"Party on shore, sir, hailing us," grinned the man.

The rascal had seen and recognized them long ago, but, out of pure love of mischief, had said nothing.

The party consisted of Harry, Ira Staines, and some half-castes carrying their luggage.

Ching-Ching looked and recognized them too. In the first rush of emotion he slid from the chair, and sat upon the deck; but speedily recovering, he bade Samson make himself scarce, and hastening below, unlocked the door where Bill Grunt and Cutten were confined.

"If I was you, genlymen," he said, "I wouldn't be skulking down here. De cap'en just comin' aboard, and he not like to find you away from your posts ob duty."

There was a light on old Bill's face as he strode out without a word. His hour of triumph had come at last, and his enemy must fall. Eddard was triumphant too, and put his wooden leg so emphatically down, as he stumped out, that Ching-Ching considered it personal, and with a dexterous movement of his leg, laid hold of the artificial limb with his foot, and brought down Cutten with a smash that was heard all over the ship.

"I see dat leg ob yourn going," said Ching-Ching calmly, "but I a lilly too late to save you."

"Where—where's my knife?" gasped Cutten; "hold 'ard, Bill, while I cut him up."

"The cap'en will cut him up," whispered Bill; "hup, Eddard, as I hear a shouting which says he's come alongside."

The injured pair departed, and Ching-Ching sat down to await the issue of his audacity, and ere long a messenger came in the form of the elated Eddard.

"Here, you feller," he said, "come on—the cap'en wants you on deck."

"Me!" exclaimed Ching-Ching, apparently overcome with surprise; "you sure he want me?"

"It's you, and no other—so get on ahead."

"I hope he's satisfied wif de way dat I command de ship in him absence," said Ching-Ching, with a cool impudence that quite took away Eddard's breath; "and mind dis, Missa Cutten, I nebber breathe a word about your mutiny."

"Go on," said Eddard, quite bottled up; "go on for the skewriosity you are, but stow your cheek this time, my man."

Inwardly trembling, but outwardly calm, Ching-Ching faced our hero, whose look was indeed stern, and Samson, who stood by his side, looked the very picture of woe.

"Ching-Ching," said Handsome Harry, "I think that you have this time passed the bounds of folly."

"Me tink so too, Missa Harry," replied the penitent.

"I am glad you think that. Do you remember me giving you a letter before you left the house of Don Salvo?"

"Yes, Missa Harry."

"What did you do with it?"

"Me eat dat letter, Missa Harry!"

"Ate it?"

"Yes, Missa Harry. 'Sammy not got any pockets, and mine so big dat I feard dat I lose him in de corners, so I put him in my mouf, and while I was meditatin' on de beauties ob nature I chewed him up."

"Now is that true?"

"As true, Missa Harry—as true—as—as dat I hab a lilly difficulty to speak the trufe now and den."

"But you read the letter first," said Harry angrily.

"No, Missa Harry, me cannot read; Sammy know dat."

"You need not appeal to Samson," said Harry; "now tell me, what put it into your head to assume the command of this—my ship?"

"To have a lilly fun wif Missa Grunt, and as de ship was lying doing nuffin, me tink dat no harm come of it."

"But much harm might have come of your fool's trick, for the Belvedere is in peril," returned Harry; "and if any one else had done it I would have hanged him at the yard-arm, but I think that you are so often led away by your mad folly that you are scarcely accountable for your actions."

A gleam of hope lighted up Ching-Ching's face, but it died out as our hero continued:

"Personally," he said, "I will not punish you; but as you have offered a gross outrage to Mr. Grunt, I leave you to him."

"And I claim the fulfilling of your promise, sir," said Bill Grunt, "that Ching-Ching be dismissed from the Belvedere."

"So be it," returned Harry; "go at once, and return no more."

"Oh! Massa Harry," began Samson, wh[illegible] our hero interrupted him:

"Samson," he said, "there are some things which the pleading of no man can touch, and threats and prayers are alike to me when my word is given. If my own life were forfeit I would not swerve from it. Let me hear no more."

"But, Missa Harry," began Ching-Ching; but he too was cut short, in the most peremptory manner.

"You have brought this on yourself, Ching-Ching. Go!"

And turning on his heel he crossed the deck, and went below, leaving the truly aghast Ching-Ching surrounded by the crew, with Samson, Cutten, and Grunt well to the fore.

"Yes!" said Cutten, softly, "you have brought it on yourself, Mister."

Ching-Ching looked at him up and down, but said nothing, and a dead silence fell upon all. The men were revolving various questions in their minds. They were these:

What would the Belvedere do without the great Ching-Ching?

Would Bill Grunt relent and forgive him?

Where would Ching-Ching go, and what would he do?

CHAPTER VIII.

EXIT CHING-CHING.

The silence was broken by the author of the disastrous practical joke. Stepping forward a pace he looked at Bill Grunt with a

face of woe which might have softened a stone; but there was no more responding emotion in the countenance of the boatswain than one might have looked for in the figure-head of a ship.

"Missa Grunt," he said, "are you downright serus?"

"Never more so," answered Bill, with a short grunt.

"Am I to leab de home ob my youth—I mean de home ob my riper years?" pursued Ching-Ching.

"You air," answered Bill, and he fully meant what he said.

"Den I make an appeal to Missa Cutten," said Ching-Ching, "whose life I save not a month ago."

"When?" asked Cutten, stoutly.

"In Fortalega harbrer, when Sammy help me."

"Do you call that saving a man's life?" demanded Cutten.

"Yes; what am it, den?"

"I was a-fishing up some water in the kettle," said Cutten, addressing the crew, "by the bows, when this low pig-tailed willain comes up and gives me a shove, and I feels the tother chap tickle something into my trousers, but over I goes, and then I finds myself a-swimming about, hooked up behind with a sharp hook, and them two beastesses lying on the bowsprit grinning like two Cheshire cheeses—I mean catshire chets—no, I don't! Blow it, what do I mean?"

"De hook was put in when you on de point of drowning," said Ching-Ching. "Oh, Sammy, where shall we find de trufe?"

Samson did not answer; and probably he had sound reasons for his silence. Ching-Ching went on:

"But I forgib dat lying old Eddard, and once more I ask Missa Grunt if him intend to be hard on an old friend?"

"I begs as how you are not to call me a friend," replied Bill; "and you may jaw for a month, but out of the Belvedere you goes."

"Den dere nuffin for me to do dan to pack my proppery, and leab de Belvedere behind," said Ching-Ching. "I soon be ready."

Taking out a red cotton handkerchief from somewhere in the depths of his left leg pocket, Ching-Ching asked the men to stand back a little, and he carefully spread it upon the deck.

"Stop here, Sammy," he said, "and see dat nobody rob me."

Then he went below, and the men, forming a large circle, waited with breathless interest for what would follow.

In about a minute he returned, bringing with him half an old comb, which, apparently, had not been used for years. This he carefully deposited in the middle of the handkerchief.

"Dere quite a history to dat comb," he said; "it once b'longed to Richard de Second, who was de fourth remperer of Pekin, and died on de walls ob Jerudlecum, while fighting against de Turks; but I not tell him story now."

"Nobody wants to hear it," growled Bill Grunt.

Ching-Ching again went below, and after a brief absence returned with a part of an old shirt, consisting of the sleeves and front—the back having been evidently torn out in some scrimmage.

"Dere am a shirt," he said, with pardonable pride, "which bery few men eber hab de chance ob putting on dere backs."

This was strictly true, for if any man had put it on in the correct way it would have been all in front, and several grinning faces attested that the point was perceived and appreciated.

"P'r'aps," continued Ching-Ching, addressing Grunt, "you never see a shirt like dat afore."

"No," replied Bill; "and don't want to see one like it again."

"Dat ain't perlite, but you am rude thro' ignorance," returned the dauntless Ching-Ching. "Hab a good look at him while I get de rest ob my proppery, or you may be sorry when I am gone."

The rest of Ching-Ching's "proppery" appeared to be mislaid, for after a very long absence he returned empty-handed.

"Dat de worst ob not habing tings under lock and key," he said; "but I certainly thought dat I could trust all de people aboard dis ship; but it seems to me," he added, looking hard at his old enemies, "dat dere am some uncommon rogues here."

"There's one on board now," replied Bill Grunt, "less a very uncommon one—but he's goin', I'm thankful to say."

"Hard-hearted to de last," exclaimed Ching-Ching, with tears in his eyes. "Oh, Missa Grunt, who would tink to look at dat bery meller face ob yourn dat you got no feeling?"

"I don't want none of your sawder," said Bill, loftily.

"Afore I tie up dis handkerchief," said Ching-Ching, looking at the valuables in it with great affection, "I make de very last appeal—but no—I so obercome dat I not got de strengf. Missa Grunt, hab de kindness to tie up my proppery and tie him bery tight, so dat none ob dem slip out."

"All right," said Bill, and he proceeded to tie the handkerchief with sundry knots, strong enough to secure Ching-Ching's treasures while two stitches of the stuff held together.

"Now, genlymen," said Ching-Ching, addressing the crew, and there was really a touch of sadness in his voice, "I tink dat what I got to say can be got ober in a few words. I was in trouble when I came to you, and in trouble when I go away. My proppery when I first turn up wasn't more dan a man want to live on, and what I take away won't keep me more than a month—if he do dat—but I don't want no more," he added, hastily, as several men put their hands into their pockets. "No; nothing but your lub and good-will. Ching-Ching am not de man to starve if dere be anything to eat on de spot or twelve mile round."

"Don't let him go, Mister Grunt," said a voice among the men.

Bill Grunt, looking more like a figure-head than ever, replied:

"That he had made up his mind to have a little peace, and go he must."

"Ah! he am quite right," said Ching-Ching, sadly. "I hab been bery wicked, and go I must; and so good-by, genlymen all."

"Good-by, good-by," cried a hundred voices, heartily.

"Good-by, Missa Grunt and Missa Cutten," said Ching-Ching, extending his hand.

They put them into their pockets.

"What! Not shake hands wif me?" urged Ching-Ching.

Bill Grunt was not bad in the main, and he held out his fist.

"You've been the torment of my life," he said, "but you may take it."

"And mine, if you like, too," said Cutten, who was always guided by Bill.

"Ah, when shall we tree meet again?" said Ching-Ching, as he gave each a grip which made them wince. "And now, Sammy, ole boy, good-by a tousand times."

Sammy presented an amazing picture of misery as his chum advanced to take leave of him. At any other time the men would have laughed at the expression of his face, but now they knew that real grief disturbed his homely features, and a respectful silence was kept by all.

And Ching-Ching was earnest too, as earnest as any man could be, and for the first time since he had joined the Belvedere the men beheld a genuine sorrow in his face.

Who that strange fantastic creature was, or where he came from, nobody knew. The various stories he had told of his birth, parentage, friends, and home, had been too bewildering for any man to hope to extract the truth from him; but he was liked by the men because he had so often raised a laugh when otherwise the Belvedere would have been dull and gloomy.

Ching-Ching was clever, too, and ability invariably makes friends. He possessed, too, a strength, agility, and bravery all his own, and the crew were sorry to lose him.

But the fiat had gone forth, the captain never broke his word, and Bill Grunt would not relent—therefore he must go.

The hands of Ching-Ching and Sammy met, and the two looked at each other for a moment in silence.

"Sammy," said Ching-Ching, "good-by, ole boy."

"Good-by," replied Samson, hurriedly, "but mus you go, Chingy?"

"Yes, old feller, Chingy mus go; but I see what you tinking ob, Sammy; you tink ob coming too, but Chingy say no! You stand by de cap'en and neber mind me."

"But where you go, Chingy?"

"I bery well known long de coast," returned Ching-Ching, with a slight smile, but the next instant he was serious again;

"so I go straight—straight away into de country right ober dere."

"But most ob dat place am great woods and barren plains, Chingy."

"All de better, Sammy, for den I can die and trouble nobody."

"Die, Chingy?"

"Yes, ole boy, for what hab I to lib for, now I hab left de Belvedere?"

There was as true a pathos in these last words as ever was heard, and many of the listeners had tears in their eyes, such tears as they had never dreamt of shedding for Ching-Ching, and as he uttered them he walked to the side and stepped into the boat which was waiting.

Samson followed with his head upon his breast.

After he had taken his seat Ching-Ching never once looked back, but kept his eyes to the front, and those on board saw the boat touch land, and he stepped out and with his little bundle went straight away into the country.

"Exit Ching-Ching," said the voice of Ira Staines, who all this time had kept out of sight, and then the sun went down and the men in silence and sadness sought their hammocks.

CHAPTER IX.

A DARING ADVENTURE.

"Any orders, captain?" asked Ira Staines, putting just his nose into the cabin door.

"Come in," replied Harry; "I want to speak with you."

Ira came in and took a seat. Harry, knowing his habits, pointed to a box of cigarettes. Ira took one, and lighting it, smoked quietly for a while.

"We cannot move out to-night," said Harry, starting up from a fit of meditation, "for Grunt was not ready."

"And his substitute, of course, did nothing!"

"Early to-morrow," continued Harry, not noticing the remark of Ira, "the Spitfire will be here, and then it must be fight or run."

"Can you not leave to-night?"

"Impossible," returned Harry, "the rocks are too dangerous, and our knowledge of them imperfect. We must steal out at the light of dawn; and yet how I hate such work! It is unworthy of the fighting Belvedere."

"Quite," said Ira, coolly.

"I would not fly from any but my countrymen," said Harry, biting his lip, "but what am I to do? They mistake my character, and pursue me. My friends—Tom most of all—urge me to avoid a collision, and trust to their energies and time to put me right. What am I to do?"

"If I were in your place," replied Ira, "I think I should be inclined to blow up the Belvedere and then drown myself."

"Oh, you would do that in my place, you think; and pray what would you do in your own?"

"Hearken to the voice of my friends and be patient."

"You would?"

"Indeed I would! What else would a sane man do?"

"Then I will hearken to you," said Harry. "By the way, has Ching-Ching really left us?"

"He has, I am sorry to say," replied Ira, and he threw his cigarette away as if it was distasteful to him.

"You seem to take it rather to heart," rejoined Harry.

"Don't you?" asked Ira.

"Yes," said our hero, candidly, "for I liked him."

"So did I," said Ira, "from the hour we met. There was something about this fellow which got hold of you, and yet, what a rascal he is!"

"An open one, at all events," said Harry, smiling.

"No hypocrisy about him," added Ira.

"And as true as steel where a friend is concerned."

Having thus supplemented Ira's eulogies upon the dismissed one, Harry took a cigarette from the box and smoked in company with the American in silence.

"Pity Grunt was so hard upon him," said Ira, as he took another cigarette. "Have you any drink handy?"

"There's some brandy in the corner, and some claret," replied Harry.

"Claret is strong enough—at most times is strong enough—but I think I must have a drop of brandy to cheer me up."

Ira mixed himself a moderately stiff glass, drank about half of it and sighed.

"A pity, I say, that Grunt was so hard upon him," he said again.

"Grunt had suffered much," replied Harry, and then they both laughed heartily.

"Upon my word," said Harry, "there were many things, which I, as captain of the Belvedere, could not recognize, but many and many a time the antics of Ching-Ching have softened a sorrowful hour."

"Samson will miss him."

"Of course he will," returned Harry, "unless he comes back."

"I do not think that he will," said Ira, gravely. "For the beggar has a pride as well as the best of us—I noticed him as he went over the side, and if ever there was resolution written on a man's face, it was written on his. You did not see him?"

"No, I went below, thinking I was best out of the way. So you think our eccentric friend will not come back?"

"I cannot conceive that he will, in the light of your dismissal."

"But we may meet him again."

"Odds against that," said Ira; "there is no knowing where he may go."

"Back to Pekin, perhaps."

"Was he ever at Pekin?" asked Ira, shaking his head.

"Who can tell? He certainly talked a deal about it," replied Harry.

And then they both laughed again.

As Ira was mixing a little more, a knock at the door disturbed him, and Bill Grunt, on being desired to enter, came in.

"What brings you here, Grunt?" asked Harry.

"Ship lights in the offing, sir. Man-o'-war, I think!"

Bill Grunt, as he gave this reply, rubbed his nose and looked a little sheepish. He seemed to be conscious of rather having committed himself. His heart, a tolerably good one in the main, was a little troubled about Ching-Ching.

"I will go up and have a look at her," said Harry; "wait here with Mr. Staines until I come down again."

When Harry was gone, Ira Staines smoked slowly and solemnly, with his eyes on Bill Grunt, who looked at the ceiling, at the floor, and all around him, anywhere but at the first mate of the Belvedere.

"Well, Grunt," said Ira, "you have got rid of your enemy?"

"Yes, sir, he's gone," replied Bill, licking his lips feverishly.

"Then you and your friend Cutten will be happy now?"

Bill did not immediately reply; perhaps his happiness was more than he could promptly express. At last he said:

"I dare say we will jog along tolerably well, sir!"

"Mr. Grunt," said Ira, with more solemnity than ever, "have you reflected on the fate of the man who left the ship to-day?"

"Can't say I have, sir," replied Bill, with a dogged look; "but I dare say he'll manage to get about. He's a cute chap."

"Yes, Grunt, but the cutest of us cannot get very fat in a barren land."

"What barren land?" asked Bill Grunt uneasily.

"Why, the land where that wretched, penniless, unfortunate Chinaman has been driven to," replied Ira. "He in all probability will be starved to death in a few days."

"I hope not," said Bill, looking like a criminal.

"I don't see how he is to avoid it," continued the mate; "here is his position. He cannot go to Fortalega or any town along the coast, and inland there is very little more than grass for him to live upon. He must starve, and I want to ask you one question."

"Ask it," said Bill, "and I'll do my best endeavors to answer it."

"Do you think that he has been guilty of anything on board of the Belvedere," said Ira, "worthy of such a terrible fate? Come, now."

"Fur to be candid," replied Bill, "I don't think he have."

"No more do I," returned Ira; "and yet he will die."

"I hope not, sir."

"You hope too late now, for in my opinion he must perish, and I would not be in your shoes for the wealth of the Indies."

"Why not, sir?" inquired the startled friend of Cutten.

"Because he is sure to haunt you."

"Haunt me, sir?"

"Yes, as sure as you are on board the Belvedere."

"Me, sir? I should be druv clean mad in a month."

"Then in a month clean mad you will be."

Ira spoke so seriously and solemnly that Bill Grunt was dumfounded and horror-stricken, and like a man who had received an awful sentence he stood, until Harry came back.

"Ira," said our hero, "I am going for a swim."

"To-night?" exclaimed Ira.

"Yes, Ira," said Harry; "and I leave you in charge of the craft. I am going to meet the Spitfire. She lies close by, not a mile from the bay. Not a word!—I am going."

"But——"

"Not a word, I say—I am going. If I do not return by dawn, leave the Belvedere to her fate, return to Don Salvo and tell him that I am a prisoner."

"And after that?" asked Ira.

"You must be guided by your own discretion. Marry Ximena and settle down. Leave me for a while. I must prepare for my journey.

Captain Grover, of the Spitfire, sat in his cabin looking at some papers, and before him stood the first lieutenant in an attitude of attention. The latter was a young man, whose face was already grog-blossomed with intemperate habits, and he would have been kicked out of the navy years before but for family interests, which kept him at his post, to the great peril of the ship, often left in his charge.

N. B.—A great many of our vessels of late have run ashore and effected collisions with other vessels. Have grog-blossomed faces anything to do with these facts?

"So, Mr. Nipper," said the captain, "we are now well in front of the bay?"

"Yes, sir," replied young grog-blossom.

"All our lights are out, of course?" said the captain.

The first lieutenant's face became deeper in color as he replied:

"I haven't given the order as yet, sir."

"Then in the name of all that is sensible, do it at once!" returned the captain, testily, and young grog-blossom hurried out.

"The curse of interest," muttered the captain; "it is the ruin of both army and navy. A big man has perchance three sons—all fools—and what does he do with them? The first he sends to the army, and the second to the navy, and the third—well, he goes into the church, to teach that which he don't try to understand, and to insist upon the practice of virtues which he totally ignores himself. Good heavens! What's that?"

The window of his cabin was open, for the night was hot, and something heavy had been thrown, apparently from the sea, through it. That something was a small grappling iron, which held fast by the side.

The first impulse of the captain was to leave the cabin, but he was a brave man—one of the few who had risen from a cabin-boy to a command; and, drawing his sword, he advanced toward the window.

Ere he could reach it a man, dripping wet, came clambering in.

He wore nothing but a shirt and trousers; hands, head, and feet were bare, and the only weapon he carried was a cutlass by his side.

"Who are you?" demanded Captain Grover.

"I am the man you seek," replied Handsome Harry, quickly putting himself between the captain and the door of his cabin.

"And why are you here?" asked Captain Grover, calmly.

"To put myself right with you," replied Harry. "I want you to understand who and what I am, and to gain you for a friend."

"If you wish me to neglect my duty you will utterly fail."

"Give me a quarter of an hour," said Harry.

The captain looked at his handsome face, and was favorably impressed.

"You may have that time," he said.

"May I fasten the door in case of intrusion?"

Just for an instant the captain hesitated, and then he said:

"You may."

"I presume," he added, pointing to the

window, "that you have no comrades in the boat."

"I have no boat," replied Harry. "I came here swimming, and alone."

"Impossible!"

"Quite true; and thanks to the lights you so kindly burned, I never once swerved from my course."

"That was the work of my dolt of a first lieutenant," said the captain. "But make the most of your time."

"I will," said Harry, and rapidly and briefly he gave an outline of his life, suppressing only the names of such people as might have got into trouble by his narration. Captain Grover listened with an attentive face, lightly thrumming the table with his fingers.

"Beyond the pursuit of the man I have named," said our hero in conclusion, "I have not willingly harmed any living creature. I have neither robbed, plundered, nor murdered. My ship has been maintained out of a private purse, and with the exception of pirate craft, we have not reaped a penny profit. I gained my point—my revenge—but the fruit which I thought would have been so sweet turned out the bitterest ever tasted by man."

"How so?" asked the captain.

"I think—nay, I am sure I may trust you with my secret," returned Harry, "but I must whisper it low, for I would not have it known to all the world."

Captain Grover bent his head, and Harry whispered a few words into his ear, which brought a rush of blood to his face.

"Merciful powers! How awful—horrible!"

"Judge my grief when I found it out," returned Harry, with tears in his eyes. "Judge what my thoughts have been since. Oh, bitter folly! Never was man more reproved for presuming to be his own avenger. But enough of that. I came to plead—not for my own sake, but for the gallant men who have served me so long, so faithfully, and well. I am innocent of piracy, and they are innocent too, but——"

"Appearances are against you," said the captain, seeing that he paused, "and I fear that in England a trial would only end one way."

"I fear so, too," said Harry, sadly; "but what say you—will you spare the Belvedere?"

"I cannot—I dare not," returned the captain. "I have a duty to perform, and I must do it."

"Then so have I," said Harry, moving toward the window; "and it is this: The Belvedere shall fight while she has two planks sticking together. Think not to take us, for when the fight has gone against us—and it may with such a craft as this—I will with my own hands scatter my ship and all that belongs to her to the winds, and I know that the act will be approved of by all who serve under me. I thank you for your courtesy. Farewell!"

He sprang out of the window, and Captain Grover heard the splash of his body into the sea. At the same instant the sentry on the look-out cried:

"Man overboard!"

"Nothing of the sort," cried the captain, thrusting his head out of the window. He acted on the impulse of the moment, and it prompted him to save the gallant young fellow. The sentry did not hear him, and called out again:

"Man overboard!"

"The adder-eared fool," muttered the captain, as he unlocked his door, and running up the companion he appeared upon the quarter-deck.

"It was nothing but some old rubbish I threw out of the window," he said. "Order, there!"

The watch fell back into their places, and the captain bade the lieutenant come below with him again.

As they entered the cabin the latter slightly reeled.

"Mr. Nipper," said the captain, "you have been drinking again."

"I can do my duty," replied Mr. Nipper, sullenly.

"I am not so sure of that," was the rejoinder of his superior; "in fact, I am certain you cannot. Drunkenness is bad in any man, but in an officer it is criminal."

"You are hard upon me, sir."

"I shall report you in my next dispatch to the admiral."

The admiral was Mr. Nipper's own uncle,

and the threat did no more than bring the dawn of a grin upon his face.

"And failing his taking notice of your misconduct," pursued the captain, "I shall carry the information to higher quarters."

Mr. Nipper's face changed, and he looked dismayed. Turning his eyes to the window he discovered the grappling-iron, which Harry had unfortunately left behind him.

"What's this, sir?" he asked, and then drunk as he was, he had sufficient intelligence to get an inkling of the facts.

"Somebody has been here, sir," he said; "somebody from outside."

Captain Grover turned his back, and sat down at the table.

"The sentry heard somebody plunge into the sea," continued the lieutenant, as he folded the cord round the grappling-iron, and advanced to the captain's side; "and who has been here you can best tell. Now, I think, sir, that we will cry quits over to-night."

"You may go," said the captain.

"I suppose, sir, you won't mind my keeping this bit of iron?"

"You may do what you please," returned the captain. "And when the interest of your friends has placed you in command of any ship, heaven help the poor fellows who go with you. There's the door."

Mr. Nipper was tolerably tough, and had as little shame as any man, but he was not proof against the scorn of his superior officer, and he slunk away.

CHAPTER X.

THE "BELVEDERE" LOSES ITS HEAD.

"No news of the captain," said Ira, as he paced up and down the deck. "I think, Grunt, that we ought to show a light."

"It's against his orders, sir," replied Grunt. "Don't do it, sir. There's a good hour to daylight, and he may be back yet."

"Samson," said Ira, "come here and tell me if you can see anything."

Samson, who was the very picture of heartbroken misery, came to his side, and in obedience to his desire, took a long and careful look at the sea.

"Massa Ira," he said, "I see notting, but if Ching-Ching here he hab a berrer look dan me. Ching-Ching de best eyesight in de world."

Then he sat down upon his haunches, and rocked to and fro like one in suffering.

"But Ching-Ching is not here," said Ira, putting a tender hand upon his shoulder, "and we must do the best we can without him."

"An' dat a berry bad best," said the unhappy Samson; "and, to make tings worse, Massa Harry gone now."

"But he may come back."

"Not to-night, or to-morrow, nor de nex day," said Samson; "for I see de spirit light in de sea, and Massa Harry be dead or in great danger."

Ira was uneasy, but he did not like to show it. Harry had been many hours away, and there were no signs of his return. In less than an hour daylight would be there.

"Grunt," he said, "you heard the captain's last orders?"

"Yes, sir, I heerd 'em—just like him to spare us!"

"But we will not spare ourselves, or desert the Belvedere," said Ira, warmly. "I know the stuff you are all made of, and instead of leaving the dear old craft to her fate, we will make a run for it."

"Hear, hear, sir."

"Dat de stuff to talk, Massa Ira," said Samson, springing to his feet. "Ching-Ching gone, and Massa Harry dead, let us go out and hab a lilly big fight."

"A paradoxical encounter, in other words," said Ira, smiling. "Mr. Grunt, have all ready; as soon as there are the faintest signs of the sun's coming, I mean to move."

"I suppose the Spitfire is still there, sir?"

"I presume so, but she has not shown a light for hours."

Harry's wishes had been known all over the Belvedere, but the men desired what Ira had proclaimed, and when his intentions were announced their bosoms burned with enthusiasm.

"What's the good of living now the

cap'en's dead?" they said; "let's have a shindy, and end the business."

"Silence fore and aft," said Ira. "Grunt, shake out the jib and mainsails."

"Aye, aye, sir."

A faint light in the east followed the command and a wild screech of welcome uprose from the multitudinous birds upon the cliff.

"Take the helm, Grunt," continued Ira; "steady, my men."

The Belvedere began to move out. Samson in the bows indicated the presence of rocks, and two men heaved the lead, passing the depth in whispers.

"Harry will not return now," muttered Ira, "and here goes for a grand fight, just to say that the Belvedere died respectably."

"Four fathoms three," said the men.

"Deep enough at present; put about a bit, Grunt."

More light, and the birds, rising like a cloud, flapped their wings with joy. The night was gone and another day had dawned —a day of life and motion to them.

"Four fathoms one," said the man with the lead.

"That's bad," muttered Ira.

"There's the Spitfire, sir," said Grunt, and there indeed she was, lying black and sullen upon the heaving waters.

"If she does not see us for ten minutes," said Ira, "we have a chance; heave the lead, my men."

"Six fathoms two."

"Hurrah! Deeper water; steady, Grunt, starboard a bit; that's the last line of rocks, and here's the sea. The Spitfire's men must be all drunk or asleep.

The lieutenant was drunk, but the watch was not asleep. The men had called his attention to the moving Belvedere, and he had only answered them with a sodden curse.

At last one of the men ran below and aroused the captain. He begged pardon, but the pirate craft had slipped her moorings, and he was afraid she would get away.

"Where is Mr. Nipper?" asked the captain, as he hurried on his coat.

"He's on deck, sir," said the man, "but——"

"You need say no more," interposed the captain. "I will be on deck in a moment."

He ran up speedily, and passing by the drunken fool who was leaning against the compass-box, took one quick glance at sea. The Belvedere was now clear of the rocks, sailing southward.

Captain Grover gave orders for the sails to be set and the anchor weighed—operations which occupied some little time, and then the Belvedere had put a wide gap between them.

As soon as the Spitfire headed south, and got well on the way in pursuit, its captain called up an officer and file of marines, and pointing to the lieutenant, said:

"Take Mr. Nipper under arrest."

"You had better be careful," grunted Mr. Nipper, looking at him with lack-lustre eye; "remember the hold I have on you."

"I have my duty to perform," returned the captain, calmly.

"You have been holding counsel with a pirate."

"Indeed!" said the other; "one day you may have to prove your words; in the meantime you are under arrest."

CHAPTER XI.

HARRY'S ADVENTURES.

When our hero came on board the Spitfire he had lights to guide him, but while in conference with its captain those lights had been extinguished by order of the first lieutenant.

Unprepared for this, our hero was considerably startled on rising to the surface to find all around him dark and still.

The first cry of Captain Grover was uttered while Harry was under the water, but the second was not spoken until the tide had carried him out of the reach of such a sound. All was dark, the sky covered with clouds, no moon, and a sea as black as ink.

"Am I going toward the land or out to sea?" was Harry's first thought, and he was unable to answer it.

When he left his own ship he had taken no heed of the tides, and simply swam toward the lights of the man-of-war; but now he had nothing to help him, as both the Spit-

fire and the Belvedere were wrapped in darkness.

There was a strong tide under him; that he could feel, and the sunfish, generally very active, stung his hands and feet, which gave him considerable pain. There was in addition to this the prospect of his falling in with a shark and losing a limb or perhaps his life, but he cared nothing for these—at least he did not trouble his mind about them; all he wanted to know was whether he was going toward the land or out to sea.

Doubt at such a time must be dreadful, and a man must have strong nerves to endure it. The best of swimmers get tired in the end, and then after a brief struggle all is over.

But Harry did not wish to die.

A few hours ago he would have been careless of his life, but now that death was hovering over him he proved that he was like other mortals by desiring to live. It was something like the old story of the man who called upon Death to take him, and when Death came he was asked to call another day.

Lightly paddling, he allowed the tide to carry him where it would. That was his only chance of safety, for if he made little or no exertion he might keep on till dawn and ascertain his true position.

Harry was a powerful swimmer, had been so all his life from childhood, and naturally stout of heart he put fear aside, steeled his mind against thoughts of peril, and tried to think of anything but the danger by which he was surrounded.

But it could not be shaken off.

The dark, starless sky, the rush of the gloomy water, and the all-pervading gloom, kept his position before him, and one of less iron nerve must have sunk in despair.

An hour passed, and he was swimming still. The clouds above broke a little, and a star peeped out.

"The star of hope!" cried Harry. "Merciful Providence, I thank Thee!"

Another and yet another orb appeared, and the gloom was partially dispelled, but he could not see far away—his eyes beheld nothing but water.

This was disheartening, but he did not quail, for he knew that he could not see more than a quarter of a mile, and yet for another hour he kept plodding on.

"Is that the dawn?" he asked, as a faint hue illumined the sky.

No! 'twas but a shooting star traversing the heavens, and in a moment all was gloom again. The dawn was yet a good two hours away.

Excitement, fatigue, and the attacks of the sunfish were now beginning to tell. Harry had no friends beside him to cheer him up, no ready hand to give him a little refreshment, no boat handy to save him if he was on the point of sinking, as great swimmers, who of late have certainly perpetrated tremendous feats, are favored with. No! He had none of these, and can we wonder if his heart began to sink?

"I cannot go much further," he thought, as he looked about him with eager eyes; "shall I cry for help?"

"Who can help me?" was his second thought. "No! I will keep on to the end. The end; ah! it is at hand."

A singing in his ears was now added to his other miseries, and balls of fire danced before his eyes. He knew what these signs forebode, and the strokes of his arms waxed fainter. The flame of life was flickering out, and the last shriek of despair—which may at such a time be wrung from any man—was rising in his threat, when his feet touched ground.

Could it be?

At first he thought that it was a mockery, a delusion; but no, there close by was the shadowy outline of a massive cliff, dimly seen by his disordered vision, and through the singing of his ears he could hear the beating of the surf upon the coast.

He was out of positive peril, but he was not yet saved.

At present he only stood upon a jutting rock, and there were many deep pools of water, favorite lurking places of the voracious shark, between him and the land, but the bare resting of the moment gave him new strength, and in a quarter of an hour he was upon terra firma.

"Saved!" was his first thankful thought, and the next was for his ship. He remembered the instructions he had given Ira, and his heart sank.

"Fool," he muttered; "I had not calculated on this, as I have not calculated on things gone by. The Belvedere is lost to me forever."

The blow was great, and told upon him severely in his weak condition. He sat down upon the shore and bowed his head upon his knees.

When he again lifted his head the dawn had broken, and he beheld a country that was new to him—a wild, rugged, desolate land, which seemed to frown and say—"Try your best, man, to make me inhabitable, and you will fail."

He gathered a few shell-fish and satisfied the first cravings of hunger; then he moved along the coast, limping as he went. The cold, hard, uncharitable ground hurt his feet, which had been stung a hundred times as he moved through the water.

He bore toward the north, knowing that in time he must come to Jumna Bay, and in his breast there lay a faint hope that he would find the Belvedere. A faint hope, indeed, only supported by the fact that its absolute loss had not been revealed.

Harry did not for a moment doubt that his orders had been obeyed. Accustomed to the implicit obedience of his officers, he felt sure that by this time—if the Spitfire remained at its post—his gallant craft was no more.

In that lay his hope—the Spitfire might have moved in the night.

It was true that the captain had given him no promise. Nay, he had absolutely refused to budge, but men oft relent, and it was just possible that after Harry left he might have relented, and left the coast as he had been asked.

That was Harry's only hope, which, feeble as it was, buoyed him up. We know that it was not that which saved the Belvedere—if truly saved she was.

Walking on such a coast was slow work, and the morning was far advanced when Harry looked back and saw the gaunt, ugly cliff, near which he had landed the previous evening, but two or three miles behind him. Worn out, he sat down, and looking around in his desolation he espied what appeared to be a wreck about half a mile further on.

And a wreck it proved to be, but it had lain on that coast many, many years, apparently untouched. He climbed over the side, and jumped upon the deck, disturbing a huge swarm of rats as he did so, and their squeakings below reminded him of the twittering of a swarm of starlings in an autumn tree.

He went below, but saw at a glance that everything in the shape of stores was eaten, but he found in the nearest cabin a pair of boots, a hat and a cutlass, which he at once annexed for his own use.

"There is a wood not a mile inland," he thought, "and I must go there in the chance of food. If I lie quietly and patiently I may have the good luck to cut down some bird or animal. Anything in the shape of food would be welcome. I can return here and cook it with some of these old timbers."

The wood in question was of vast extent, stretching for miles on either side, and it appeared to be a virgin forest—that is, a forest where foot of man ne'er trod. But Harry was wise enough to know that in such a place he might look out for some of the wild wandering tribes which are to be found in the vast continent of South America.

It was well that he was prepared, for as soon as he put his foot beneath the shade of the trees a horde of naked, screeching brutes in the form of men leaped out upon him.

He saw that they were on the war-trail, for they were ghastly in their paint, and he thought his last hour had come, but he was resolved to die hard—and waving his cutlass he stood his ground undaunted.

The savages were armed with bows and arrows and spears, but two or three of their number carried huge clubs, which they wielded most dexterously. This, however, was all they seemed inclined to do, for none appeared to like the look of either Harry or his weapon.

After a considerable amount of caper-cutting, one who appeared to be the leader seemed to screw his courage up, and he made a signal for them to advance. In response the rest rushed forward in a body, and the attack threatened to be overwhelming.

Harry made a slash at the foremost, and

opened a vein or two in his right leg, to his great discomfiture, but the others came on howling, and in the rush Harry was borne to the earth.

"All over," he gasped. "Do your work quickly, you beggars—I can die."

"Golly, wurra dis?" said a familiar voice. "One, ten, twenty, forty again one man. Ah! smashee am de game now. Ah! dis am de way you entertain de stranger, am it? Golly and pumpkin sarse, I show you a new trick—take dat."

And working his arms and legs with wonderful effect there came rushing to our hero's rescue—who?

Ching-Ching.

[THE END.]

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